GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1986
ANSWERED ON:27.08.2007
FIELD FIRING RANGES FOR MILITARY EXERCISE
Paraste Shri Dalpat Singh

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Field Firing Ranges for the Army;

(b) whether there are some Field Firing Ranges which are non-operational due to ban on such activity in forests;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether there was some controversial issue in this regard between the Environment Ministry and Defence Ministry; and

(e) if so, the details in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY)

(a) At present, 40 notified and 12 acquired Field Firing Ranges (FFRs) are available to the Army for training and field firing.

(b) & (c): There are 52 FFRs which are non-operational since they have not been re- notified by the State Governments. With the enactment of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, as amended in 1989 and the Supreme Court Order dated 30.10.2002, the State Governments are insisting on payment of cost of Compensatory Afforestation (CA) and Net Present Value (NPV) for re-notifying the FFRs since use of forest land as FFR has been classified as a non-forestry activity by the Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF).

(d) & (e): The Ministry of Defence (MoD) had requested the MoEF in august, 2005 to take up the matter with the concerned authorities in the various States for immediate re-notification of 19 FFRs without pre-payment of CA and NPV so that the Army could conduct its necessary training and field firing. MoEF had stated in October, 2005 that for the purpose of compensating or restricting possible adverse impact on environment, CA was being insisted upon according to the guidelines and the rules framed under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and the said Act would be applicable only on the actual impact area of the FFR and not the entire area. MoEF had advised the Army authorities to place the case of FFRs for exemption from payment of NPV before the Expert Committee constituted by the Supreme Court. This has been done and is being followed up.